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PRESS RELEASE

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Department on Aging Recognizes World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

SPRINGFIELD, III. – Ahead of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) are highlighting the warning signs of adult abuse and how to put a stop to it in Illinois.

“Every single person – no matter their age, gender, citizenship, sex, ability, race, or religion – deserves to feel safe and secure,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “This World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, I call on all our residents to learn about the warning signs of elder abuse so they can do their part to keep our communities safe. Illinois is committed to ensuring our older residents are treated with the respect they deserve.”

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, observed annually on June 15, serves as a call to action for individuals, organizations and communities to raise awareness about the abuse, neglect and exploitation of older adults. Every year, an estimated one in 10 older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation. And that’s only part of the picture: Experts believe that elder abuse is significantly underreported, in part because many communities lack the social supports that would make it easier for those who experience abuse to report it. Research suggests that as few as one in 14 cases of elder abuse come to the attention of authorities.

Illinois’ [Adult Protective Services \(APS\)](#) program aims to prevent and resolves instances of abuse against older adults and persons with disabilities aged 18-59. The program is coordinated through 39 local provider agencies, whose trained caseworkers investigate allegations of abuse and connect victims with appropriate resources. During fiscal year 2021, the most recent reporting period for which data is available, the APS program received a total of 20,567 reports of suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation. IDoA, regional Area Agencies on Aging and local provider agencies have worked uninterrupted throughout the pandemic to investigate all reported allegations of abuse.

For information on the warning signs of adult abuse, visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/Engage/Pages/default.aspx>. To report suspected abuse, exploitation or neglect of an older adult or person with a disability, call the statewide, 24-hour APS hotline at **1-866-800-1409**.

“We are committed to creating an Illinois where older adults and persons with disabilities can thrive and live free from abuse in their communities,” **said IDoA Director Paula Basta**. “The Department on Aging and our partners continue to make meaningful strides to strengthen protections for vulnerable adults and encourage everyone to learn to recognize and report any signs of mistreatment.”

IDoA serves and advocates for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life. For

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The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

information about the Department's programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/programs> or contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

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